

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, EI

SUBJ: CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT EXTREMISTS DISCUSS SIMILAR
SOLUTIONS

1. DESMOND BOAL'S PROPOSAL FOR AN "AMALGAMATED IRELAND"
(REPORTED BY CONGEN BELFAST) NATURALLY RAISED MUCH INTEREST IN
REPUBLIC. MOREOVER, UNLIKE MANY OTHER RADICAL PROPOSALS, THIS ONE
HAS SHOWN SOME LASTING POWER. THERE WAS A PREDICTABLE POSI IVE
RESPONSE FROM BOTH OFFICIAL AND PROVO SINN FEIN, SINCE BOAL SEEMED
TO BE PROPOSING A SORT OF INSTANT UNITED IRELAND, ADMITTEDLY
ACCOMPANIED BY A CONTINUANCE OF PROTESTANT HEGEMONY IN THE NORTH.
FOR DUBLIN AUDIENCE, HOWEVER, MOST INTERESTING FACT WAS ISSUANCE OF
TWO STATEMENTS BY A GROUP CLAIMING TO REPRESENT THE ULSTER
VOLUNTEER FORCE (AN EXTREME PROTESTANT GROUP). LATEST OF THESE
STATEMENTS APPEARED IN BELFAST SUNDAY NEWS FEBRUARY 3, AND IN ALL
DUBLIN PAPERS FEBURARY 4. IN THIS STATEMENT, UVF PROPOSES
ESTABLISHMENT OF A "COUNCIL OF ULSTER" AS "A DEBATING CHAMBER"
FOR BOTH CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS. MUCH OF ACCOMPANYING LANGUAGE IS
REMARKABLY CONCILIATORY, IF AUTHENTIC. IT CALLS FOR A NEW SOCIETY
BASED UPON UNITY OF PROTESTANT AND CATHOLICS, THEN APOLOGIZES
FOR SECTARIAN BELIEFS THAT RESULTED FROM FIFTY YEARS OF
INDOCTRINATION BY UNIONIST LEADERSHIP. BOAL IS PRAISED AS THE ONLY
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LOYALIST WITH A REAL POLICY. AT SAME TIME, STATEMENT SAYS THAT UVF

WILL HELP DESTROY THE SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. IN REPUBLIC, BOTH PROVISIONAL AND OFFICIAL SINN FEIN HAVE AGAIN RELEASE STATEMENTS COMMENDING UVF. INDEED, IT IS HARD TO DISTINGUISH PROVO FROM UVF STATEMENT ON SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDS.

2. THE INCIPIENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN EXTREMISTS IS NOT ALL POSITIVE. IN PARTICULAR, THEIR UNANIMOUS DISTASTE FOR SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT IS UNFORTUNATE: SUNNINGDALE HAS ALREADY PRODUCED A POWER-SHARING GOVERNMENT AND IS MOST LOGICAL STEP TO FUTURE PROGRESS. FURTHER, AGREEMENT BETWEEN EXTREMISTS IS PROBABLY NOT NEARLY AS WIDE AS IT SEEMS ON SURFACE. IF THEY WERE FORCED TO AGREE ON EXACT ROLE OF ANY NEW NI PARLIAMENT, THEIR DIFFERENCES MIGHT BECOME OBVIOUS. POSSIBLY STRONGEST BOND IS DISLIKE OF BRITISH AND OF WILY POLITICANS WHO ARGUE THAT SUNNINGDALE SHOULD SATISFY EVERYONE. THIS COULD LEAD TO COLLABORATION IN VIOLENCE DIRECTED AGAINST FAULKNER, SDLP, AND BRITISH.

3. NEVERTHELESS, FACT IS THAT EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES HAVE BEGUN TO COME UP WITH AT LEAST A THEORETICAL ALTERNATIVE TO SUNNINGDALE. BOAL AND THE PROVO IRA CAN CLAIM JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF THE IDEA, SINCE PROVOS HAVE LONG URGED A FEDERATED IRELAND IN TERMS SIMILAR TO BOAL'S PROPOSAL. AT WORST, THIS CONCEPT IS MORE IMAGINATIVE THAN ANYTHING PRODUCED BY FAULKNER'S ELECTED OPPOSITION. WITH ALL ITS NAIVETE AND CONFUSION. THIS IS A VALID INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE, AND IN SOME WAYS MORE ADVANCED THAN SUNNINGDALE.

4. IN LONG TERM, SOME SORT OF FEDERATED IRELAND SEEMS A REAL POSSIBILITY, BUT PATH TO IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY TO BE THE PRAGMATIC SUNNINGDALE ROUTE THAN THE DRAMATIC ONE ADVOCATED BY BOAL AND THE PROVOS. MOORE

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